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ABSTRACT

One aspect of staff development that has not received much attention is staff counseling. In fact, the general pastoral care of the teaching staff is largely neglected. Since most problems of teachers have a personal nature, what is needed is a specially trained staff within the institution to offer personal counseling. This counseling could focus on relationship problems between colleagues or between colleagues and subordinates or supervisors. Teachers also frequently need support in problems with students. Counseling can help teachers with their career problems and can make possible realistic but nonthreatening teacher appraisal. The administrative elements in the teachers' jobs from induction to retirement are all concerns for counseling help. Good leadership and good management are more likely to be brought about by counseling rather than training of individuals in techniques. Counseling may also be needed to help with teachers' personal or home problems. One approach to counseling is to develop the use of counseling techniques as a mode of operation throughout the institution. In this approach, counseling techniques are used as a basis for all teaching or managerial relationships. No matter what specific approach is utilized, counseling programs to supply the emotional needs of teachers are long overdue. (Author/JM)

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STAFF COUNSELLING IN EDUCATION

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There has been a considerable increase in recent years in interest in Staff Development in Higher Education. For the most part this has been concerned with improving the quality of teaching, increasing the opportunities for further professional development, and introducing the idea of management training or development for senior staff of Further and Higher education institutions. A useful account of developments in the university context is given in the Changing University where the term Staff Development is preferred for the activity of further professional training in the organisational context. Staff Development is defined as

> "a systematic attempt to harmonize individual's interests and wishes and their carefully assessed requirements for furthering their careers with the forthcoming requirements of the organisation within which they expected (sic) to work". (1)

It is virtually inevitable that Staff Development programmes take on an institutional form and become an additional dimension of management and control and it is not unlikely that as Staff Development catches on, as it surely will, it becomes a somewhat mechanical and authoritarian process - a tendency hinted in the quotation given.

One aspect of Staff Development, however, which has not received much attention and is perhaps less open to manipulation is Staff Counselling. Staff Development usually manifests itself in some form of course or collective event outside the organisation or marginal to its central activity.(2) Hardly anyones takes Staff Development seriously apart from the individual who wants time off to attend a course or conference in

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(1) *David Warren Piper and Ron Glatter: The Changing University NFER 1977 p.24*

(2) *In spite of a contrary implication in Ron Glatter's grid (p.26) op.cit*

which he is interested or who wants secondment or sabbatical to obtain a higher qualification or to do some research and teaching elsewhere. There are good reasons for being cynical about Staff Development as at present practised but no useful purpose will be served here by rehearsing what is well known among further and higher education teachers. There are other positive things to be said.

In schools, colleges, universities and polytechnics there has grown up over the years a considerable provision in student counselling, often of a very high order and, by now, very well known. More recently the concern for student welfare has extended the idea of counselling to a more general one of 'pastoral care'.(3) In institutions of Further and Higher education provision of student services is often of a high order although there is a great deal still to be done. However, the logical extension of concern to a pastoral concern for staff does not seem to have been made and in this regard educational institutions are more lacking than almost any other form of adult employment. There has always been a strong, and doubtless valuable, tradition that teachers are well able to look after themselves and do not need the 'care' that it is generally considered other groups of employees require. Yet in some regards teachers are more at risk than other groups - doctors and lawyers, perhaps, only excepted.

There is a great deal of observational evidence, currently highlighted in the closing of colleges of education, that the general pastoral care of teaching staff is largely neglected. Teachers might well be reluctant to demand the kind of provision that outsiders would consider essential and, indeed, there was considerable reaction within education at the introduction of a 'personnel function' at the time of local government reorganisation. Even where the promise of help (or interference) from Local Government Personnel Departments was made, nothing of any consequence followed. Yet it would seem that an essential area of development within present resources is one of pastoral concern within schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities and that the initial emphasis should be on the most pressing need which is not so much for Staff Development as forms of personal counselling.

Note (3) *Best R.E., Jarvis C.B., Ribbins P.M., Pastoral Care: Concept and Process British Journal of Educational Studies Vol.XXV No.2 June 1977*

Anyone with experience of education knows that most problems of individuals have a very personal nature. There is no collective tradition in education as there is elsewhere, especially in industry, where the role of shop steward is important. Nor do teachers have interviews with their bosses over organisational matters in the way that other workers do - negotiating pay rises, holiday dates, leave of absence, production or equipment problems, working conditions. Teachers tend to accept very readily the circumstances in which they find themselves and do not expect their boss to change them overnight. Teachers grumble among themselves - often loud and long enough but still among themselves - and keep personal matters out of the conversation. In many ways it behoves a teacher to be seen to be just like other workers. As a consequence, problems become personalised and are often kept secret when they should be shared. The answer to the situation is the development of personal counselling within the institution by specially trained staff who have the status to deal easily and comfortably with the senior management team; the same relationship to the institution as Student Counsellors but distinct from Student Services. The Staff Counselling Group would most appropriately be members of the institutions Staff Development Unit but would have this additional professional function. The kind of matters that would receive their attention can be described in general terms and fall into three categories - organisational matters, career and professional issues, and personal problems.

Organisational matters arise when there is some conflict or puzzlement between the individual and the organisation. They may be issues of relationship with superiors or subordinates or members of the administration. A teacher often experiences exasperation and/or frustration but because of the way the system works he will be unable to resolve the matter. So frustration and anger build up in his mind and he needs help to unravel the feelings that have engulfed him. The incidence of organisational anxiety is much greater than senior staff ever acknowledge for they often have no idea of the state of morale of their colleagues or the aggression that is hidden for the sake of propriety or a political sense. These problems are ones we commonly expect from members of any organisation but just because they are common they are no less important. Sometimes we tend to be impatient

but however reasonable or otherwise the outsider may consider a problem to be, to the one who faces the problem matters can be difficult enough. Just as Heads of Department have 'subordinate' colleagues who present difficulties, so subordinates have problems with their Heads. In educational institutions not nearly enough recognition is given to problems of relationships. Yet all the prognostications are that inter-personal problems will increase as promotion prospects deteriorate and there becomes less mobility in the educational system. Then there are problems of role, role definition and role expectation which are exaggerated in education where role behaviour is never well defined but expectations are often considerable, severe and not well negotiated. Counselling helps to sort matters out.

A second group of organisational problems centres around problems with students. It is not easy for teachers to be aware of the difficulties of students until they are suddenly surprised when something has gone badly wrong. It may then be easy enough to call in help for the student from Student Services but the teacher himself needs help and reassurance. This is especially so when students have breakdowns or threaten desperate behaviour or attempt suicide, or are in financial, marital or health difficulties. Often the teacher does not know how to respond, or whether he has taken the right action. He may not know whether to call in help or not; or even what help is available. Sometimes he spends many hours with the student trying ineffectively to 'counsel' but because he has few skills he makes the matters worse, at least for himself. Teachers need support quite frequently in such situations and only an acceptable and available colleague who can be a personal counsellor will help him through a period of considerable stress. Further-more, when a teacher knows that he, too, can go to a trained counsellor for advice, the speed with which help is provided for the student is increased.

Teachers often worry needlessly about the problems of students. Sometimes this arises out of a real sympathy and concern but sometimes it is because of needs in the teacher himself. Teachers need to feel successful and yet there are few occasions when they receive the affirming strokes they need. When a student asks for attention he is showing his need for his teacher and the opportunity to be actively

wanted is often too good to miss. Usually there is little awareness of this mutuality of need but just as in psychotheraphy it is recognised that the psychotherapist often needs his client as much as vice versa, so it is with teachers and students. When counselling help is available, the teacher can more easily direct his energies towards student needs instead of also working, albeit subconciously, on his own needs. And counsellors can provide in a realistic way the emotional support and affirmation the teacher requires.

The career problems of teachers are largely overlooked in all kinds of educational institutions. For a long time it was considered indecent to express openly one's ambition and even nowadays there is a coyness about promotion that is quite unrealistic. Promotion for any teacher is a token of recognition and few educational institutions offer other forms of recognition. Indeed, in Higher Education, external recognition of the teacher is demanded - publications, reviews, outside lectureships and consultancy - before the institution is prepared to show recognition. And often the institution is not prepared to support requests for time and consideration to gain outside recognition. It is often thought that advantages occur to awkward and difficult members of staff because they are the only ones seen to benefit from manoeuvring in jobs and perquisites. Organisations need to find other ways of rewarding people but many problems are less concerned with monetary reward than other kinds of recognition. Counselling can help individuals, especially those in mid and late career, to come to see their present position much more clearly and positively and to be aware of the potential advantages. At the same time, good counselling will help in the making of a correct appraisal of the situation, a realistic acknowledgement of a bad situation and the development of strategies to deal with it.

It should be quite possible to design six-monthly appraisal sessions based on a form of counselling in which colleagues examine together their current professional and personal situations. The older type

of appraisal based on industrial management by objectives models is not suited to educational organisations. The idea of setting quantifiable targets is foreign to the work of education and against the climate of most schools and colleges. But there are kinds of targets or objectives expressed in a general way that are meaningful to teachers and these can be developed in discussion. Counselling appraisal is non-hierarchical but is an opportunity to talk through with one or two colleagues (perhaps with the help of one as a third party facilitator) how a teacher feels about himself and his job at the present time and how he plans to develop things in the future. In this form of appraisal, the only promises he makes are to himself but they become both realistic and challenging but not potentially condemnatory.

Other career decisions may be more critical and techniques from occupational psychology may be employed by counsellors. We are moving into a period where there may be more changes in jobs, in mid-career, more early retirements, more changing direction. It seems ridiculous for an individual to occupy the same job or even the same type of job for 30 years or more. The whole concept of full-time employment needs to come into question and there are many possibilities for enrichment of occupation within employment. Education, of all types of employment, ought to be able to offer the richest range of alternative and additional activities. We have hardly begun to think about new ways of organising education and exploring the possibilities of an enriched quality of employment. Yet this is an area that will increasingly concern us. Earlier retirement should not be a new and deadly phase of employment but a fulfilment of opportunities and activities developed during the earlier years. Good counselling helps an individual to see his work in perspective and to look for opportunities of life enrichment that are not dependent on acknowledged "success" in his job.

There is an important continuing area of pastoral concern in the whole institutional professional life of each teacher. The administrative elements in his job from induction to retirement are all concerns for pastoral care and counselling help. There are two stages of induction

settling in, seeking promotion, mid-career, settling down to the late career, security (or otherwise) and pre-retirement. Many teachers need to make careful appraisal in their first year of teaching and others will do so at other crucial times. Induction is a very personal matter as well as an institutional one. We make too many assumptions about the way people fit into organisations; we take unilateral decisions on behalf of our colleagues. Teaching problems do not all occur in the first year and it is more difficult to admit them later on. Many issues subsumed under further training or staff development are essentially personal. Managerial competence and qualities of leadership are more likely to be dependent on personality and personality adjustment than technical issues. Good leadership and good management cannot be taught as skills and techniques, they are qualities of personality - confidence, self security, realistic self-awareness, empathy. Problems of inter-personal relations more often than not require counselling rather than training of individuals in techniques.

There is little doubt that much of the effort put into training for leadership, for instance, is misplaced. Leadership style is a function of personality not a theatrical part that can be learned. The critical area for leadership in educational institutions is Head of Department or unit. Many leaders need to change their style of behaviour if they are to become more effective because the qualities that brought them to their position are seldom the ones they need in a 'management' role. Yet to have to change one's behaviour is the most threatening requirement of all and no 'training' can bring it about. Only a counselling mode can build the self-confidence necessary in changed behaviour, a significant change in the self-concept and the individual's view of his position in the world. Sadly, the managers who need the most help are the least likely to ask for it.

The third group of problems is "personal" in that they originate outside the institution. It is generally recognised that we do not live in separate worlds but bring the same personal qualities to all situa-

tions.Whether each new situation is congenial or not is a matter for discovery. A teacher may be happy at work and unhappy at home because of factors in each situation. But generally we carry much with us from situation to situation. Marriage problems affect our relationships and preoccupations at work. Health certainly affects us everywhere though some situations may be easier than others. Each of us brings a whole range of personal problems to work and many of them get in the way of our relationships and performance. All of us can use some help; some of us need a great deal. It can be provided by a good, comprehensive counselling provision because the confidentiality of shared experience is assured. Indeed, it may be much easier to seek professional counselling help at work than to go and seek it from some external agency.

One approach to counselling that has been attempted (4) is to develop counselling as a mode of operation throughout the institution - to consider counselling as a basis for all relationships, teaching and managerial. Counselling training is offered to all staff who wish (teaching and administrative) and an initial programme is followed by further counselling training sessions and case consultancy. The idea is to move into a facilitative and caring climate of organisation and to move away from the normal hierarchic dependency situation. A great deal of time is required for this shift in organisational climate but it is the only way in which an educational process can be truly collaborative between teachers and students, as well as teachers themselves. Since so much of what passes for education is denied in the educational process itself, the challenge of change for educational institutions is initially critical. Counselling skills are available; Many teachers are familiar with their use; a comparative few are trained in some way as counsellors and a shift towards a wide counselling mode in colleges etc. should now be possible.

It certainly cannot be denied that the need for more pastoral concern for teaching and administrative staff in education is long overdue. Many problems in educational reform arise because teachers are

(4) At the Anglian Regional Management Centre, N.E.London Polytechnic during 1976-77 a programme of counselling training was introduced to staff who were interested. Nearly half the academic staff attended. A similar project is underway in a Hampshire Comprehensive School (1977 onwards)

emotionally unsupported and fear change. The demands on education to change and adapt will become greater not less in the next decade or so and the long neglected area of staff relationships needs immediate attention. Throughout its history, reform has overlooked the personal needs of the teacher. In a counselling mode, the balance of attention to the intellectual and emotional sides of personality receives a correct and stabilised equilibrium. For too long it has been assumed that only the intellects of teachers require development and many have become emotionally under-nourished as a consequence. This missing dimension must be brought back into educational organisation for it is strange how the concern for students by teachers has not extended to teachers themselves. After all, it was teachers themselves who developed the concept and skills of systematic pastoral care and it would be a sad irony if they were to suffer by neglecting to employ counselling for their own needs.

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